

## IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS IN DATING BEHAVIOR<sup>1</sup>

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It was proposed that an individual would most often expect to date, would try to date, and would like a partner of approximately his own social desirability. In brief, we attempted to apply level of aspiration theory to choice of social goals. A field study was conducted in which individuals were randomly paired with one another at a "Computer Dance." Level of aspiration hypotheses were not confirmed. Regardless of S's own attractiveness, by far the largest determinant of how much his partner was liked, how much he wanted to date the partner again, and how often he actually asked the partner out was simply how attractive the partner was. Personality measures such as the MMPI, the Minnesota Counseling Inventory, and Berger's Scale of Self-Acceptance and intellectual measures such as the Minnesota Scholastic Aptitude Test, and high school percentile rank did not predict couple compatibility. The only important determinant of S's liking for his date was the date's physical attractiveness.

In one of his delightful articles Goffman (1952) said that: "A proposal of marriage in our society tends to be a way in which a man sums up his social attributes and suggests to a woman that hers are not so much better as to preclude a merger or a partnership in these matters [p. 456]." Goffman's proposal suggests that one's romantic feelings and choices are affected both by the objective desirability of the romantic object and by one's perception of the possibility of attaining the affection of the other. Rosenfeld (1964) has demonstrated that an individual's choice of a *work partner* was affected by his assumptions about whether or not the partner would reciprocate his choice.

The following field experiment was conducted to see if one's romantic aspirations are influenced by the same factors that affect one's level of aspiration in other areas. (Level of aspiration theory is presented in Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944.) We wish to point out that this study concentrates on *realistic* social choices. In their discussion of "*ideal choices*" Lewin et al. conclude that an individual's ideal goals are usually based entirely on the desirability of the goal, with no

consideration of the possibility of attaining this goal. Probably an individual's fantasy romantic choices are also based entirely on the desirability of the object. One's *realistic* level of aspiration, on the other hand, has been shown by Lewin et al. to depend both on the objective desirability of the goal and on one's perceived possibility of attaining that goal.

We propose that one's realistic romantic choices will be affected by the same practical considerations that affect other realistic goal setting. Lewin et al. note that since the attractiveness of a goal and the probability of attaining that goal are negatively correlated, the goal an individual can expect to attain is usually less attractive than the one he would desire to attain. In romantic choices, attractiveness and availability would also seem to be negatively correlated. The more abstractly desirable a potential romantic object is, the more competition there probably is for him (or her), and the less likely it is that a given individual will be able to attain his friendship. Thus, one's *realistic* social choices should be less "socially desirable" than one's fantasy social choices. In addition, Lewin et al. note that one's realistic level of aspiration is affected by his perception of own

<sup>1</sup> This study was financed by the Student Activities Bureau, University of Minnesota.

skills. In the romantic area, we would expect that the individual's own social attractiveness would affect his level of aspiration. On the basis of the above reasoning, we would propose the following specific hypotheses:

1. Individuals who are themselves very socially desirable (physically attractive, personable, or possessing great material assets) will require that an appropriate partner possess more social desirability than will a less socially desirable individual.

2. If couples varying in social desirability meet in a social situation, those couples who are similar in social desirability will most often attempt to date one another.

3. In addition, we propose that an individual will not only *choose* a date of approximately his own social desirability, but also that after actual experience with potential dates of various desirabilities an individual will express the most *liking* for a partner of approximately his own desirability. This prediction is not directly derived from level of aspiration formulations. Lewin et al. predict only that an individual will choose a goal of intermediate attractiveness and difficulty; they do not propose that an individual will come to *like* goals of intermediate difficulty. We thought that unattainably desirable individuals might be derogated (although inappropriately difficult tasks are not) for the following reasons:

1. If a man chooses an inappropriately difficult task and then fails to attain it, all he suffers is defeat. The task cannot point out to him that he has been presumptuous in choosing a goal so far beyond his level of ability. We speculated, however, that an extremely desirable date can be counted on to make it clear to a somewhat undesirable individual that he is foolish to try to win her friendship and that he should not embarrass her by asking her out.

2. We thought that perhaps an extremely attractive date would not be as considerate of an unattractive date as with a date more average in appearance.

#### PROCEDURE

Subjects were 376 men and 376 women who purchased tickets to a Friday night dance held on the last day of "Welcome Week." (Welcome Week is a

week of cultural, educational, and social events provided for incoming University of Minnesota freshmen.) The dance was advertised along with 87 other events in a handbook all incoming freshmen received. In fact, however, the dance was not a regular Welcome Week event and had been set up solely to test our hypotheses. The handbook advertisement describing a Computer Dance said: "Here's your chance to meet someone who has the same expressed interests as yourself." Freshmen were told that if they would give the computer some information about their interests and personalities, the computer would match them with a date. Tickets were \$1.00 per person; both men and women purchased their own tickets. Long lines of subjects appeared to buy tickets on the opening day—only the first 376 male and 376 female students who appeared were accepted.

For experimental purposes, ticket sales and information distribution were set up in extremely bureaucratic style: The subject walked along a table in the foyer of the Student Union. First, a student sold him a ticket. He moved down the table, and a second student checked his identification card to make sure he was a student and told him to report to a large room two flights above. When the subject arrived at the upstairs room, a third student met him at the door and handed him a questionnaire with his student code number stamped on it and asked him to complete the questionnaire at an adjoining table. A fourth student directed him to a seat. (Proctors around the room answered the subject's questions and discouraged talking.)

#### *Physical Attractiveness Rating*

The four bureaucrats were actually college sophomores who had been hired to rate the physical attractiveness of the 752 freshmen who purchased tickets to the dance.<sup>2</sup>

We assumed that one's social desirability would include such attributes as physical attractiveness, personableness, and material resources and that these aspects would be positively correlated with one another. We chose physical attractiveness to be the indicator of the subject's social desirability since this trait was more quickly assessed under standard conditions.

As each subject passed, the four raters rapidly and individually evaluated the subject's physical attractiveness on an 8-point scale, going from 1 ("Extremely unattractive") to 8 ("Extremely attractive"). Obviously, these attractiveness ratings had to be made very quickly; usually the rater had less than 1 or 2 seconds to look at the subject before making his evaluation, and rarely did the rater get to hear the subject say more than "OK" or "Thank you." The briefness of this contact was

<sup>2</sup> David Kushner, John B. Kelly, Susan Lamp-land, and Victoria Noser rated the attractiveness of all the subjects. These students were simply told to use their own judgment in rating the subjects and to be careful not to communicate their ratings to the other raters.

by design. Since we had chosen to use one aspect of social desirability as an index of total desirability, as far as possible, we wanted to be sure that the raters were assessing only that aspect. We did not want our ratings of attractiveness to be heavily influenced by the subject's personableness, intelligence, voice quality, etc.

Once the subjects were seated in the large upstairs room, they began filling out the questionnaire. The subject first answered several demographic questions concerning his age (nearly all were 18), height, race, and religious preference. The next measures were designed to assess how considerate the subject felt he would be of a fairly attractive date.

The remainder of the booklet contained material which we wanted to encourage the subjects to answer honestly. For this reason, a section prefacing the questions assured participants that their answers to the questions would not be used in selecting their date. We explained that we were including these questions only for research purposes and not for matching purposes. In addition, the subjects were reassured that their statements would be kept confidential and associated only with their ticket number, never their name. Four pages of questions followed this introduction. In the pages following this introduction, four variables were measured:

*Subject's popularity (self-report).* The subject was asked how popular he was with members of the opposite sex, how easy it was to get a date with someone he thought was exceptionally attractive, and how many dates he had had in the last 6 months.

*Subject's nervousness.* The subject was asked how nervous or awkward he felt about the idea of going on a blind date.

*Measure of the subject's expectations in a computer date.* The subject was asked how physically attractive, how personally attractive, and how considerate he expected his date to be.

*Subject's self-esteem.* Questions from a scale developed by Berger (1952) ended the questionnaire. The subject was asked how true 36 different statements were of himself. The subject was once again reassured that this information was confidential and would not be used in selecting his computer date. (A typical question is: "When I'm in a group, I usually don't say much for fear of saying the wrong things.") This test was scored so that a high score indicated high self-acceptance and high self-esteem.

From the University's state-wide testing service program at the University of Minnesota,<sup>3</sup> several additional measures were secured for the subject whenever possible. The subject's high school academic percentile rank, his Minnesota Scholastic Aptitude Test (MSAT) score, and his score on the

MMPI or the Minnesota Counseling Inventory (MCI) were secured.

Two days after the subject completed his questionnaire, he was assigned to a date. Dates were randomly assigned to the subjects with one limitation: a man was never assigned to a date taller than himself. On the few occasions when the assigned female date would have been taller than the male, the IBM card next in the shuffled deck was selected as the partner. When subjects picked up their dates' name, the experimenter advised them to meet their dates at the dance. Many couples, however, met at the girl's home.

The dance was held in a large armory. In order to be admitted to the armory, the subjects had to turn in their numbered tickets at the door. In this way, we could check on whether or not a given couple had attended the dance. Of the 376 male and 376 female students who signed up for the dance and were assigned a partner, 44 couples did not attend.<sup>4</sup> The subjects generally arrived at the dance at 8:00 P.M. and danced or talked until the 10:30 P.M. intermission.

### *Assessing Subjects' Attitudes toward One Another*

Subjects' attitudes toward their dates were assessed during intermission. Several times during Welcome Week, we had advertised that couples should hold onto their ticket stubs until intermission, because these stubs would be collected during intermission and a \$50 drawing would be held at that time. When the subjects bought their tickets, we reminded them that they would need to save their tickets for an intermission lottery. They were also told that during the dance they would have a chance to tell us how successful our matching techniques had been.

During the 10:30 P.M. intermission, the subjects were reminded that tickets for the lottery would be collected while they filled out a brief questionnaire assessing their dates and the dance. The purpose of the lottery was simply to insure that the subjects would retain their ticket stubs, which contained an identifying code number, and would report to an assigned classroom during intermission to evaluate their dates. Men were to report to one of seven small rooms to rate their dates and to turn in their stubs; women were to remain in the large armory to evaluate their partners.

The forms on which the subjects rated their partner were anonymous except that the subjects were asked to record their ticket numbers in the right-hand corner. This number, of course, identified the subjects perfectly to us, while not requiring the subjects to sign their name to their evaluation. A crew of experimenters rounded up any subjects who had wandered to rest rooms, fire es-

<sup>3</sup>We would like to thank Theda Hagenah and David Wark of the Student Counseling Bureau, University of Minnesota, for providing access to this information.

<sup>4</sup>By far the most common reason given by the subjects for not attending the dance was that the date was of a different religion than the subject and that their parents had objected to their dating.

capas, or adjoining buildings and asked them to turn in their ticket stubs and to complete the evaluation questionnaires.

In the eight rooms where the subjects were assembled to evaluate their dates, the experimenters<sup>5</sup> urged the subjects to take the questionnaire seriously and to answer all questions honestly. All but 5 of 332 couples attending the dance completed a questionnaire, either during intermission or in a subsequent contact 2 days later.

The intermission questionnaire asked the subject about the following things: (a) how much the subject liked his date, (b) how socially desirable the date seemed to be ("How physically attractive is your date?") "How personally attractive is your date?"), (c) how uncomfortable the subject was on this blind date, (d) how much the date seemed to like the subject, (e) how similar the date's values, attitudes, and beliefs seemed to the subject's own, (f) how much of an effort the subject made to insure that the date had a good time, and how much of an effort the date made on the subject's behalf, (g) whether or not the subject would like to date his partner again.

How often couples actually dated was determined in a follow-up study. All participants were contacted 4-6 months after the dance and asked whether or not they had tried to date their computer date after the dance. If the experimenter was unable to contact either the subject or the subject's date in 2 months of attempts, the couple was excluded from the sample. Only 10 couples could not be contacted.

## RESULTS

### *Physical Attractiveness and Social Desirability*

We assumed that we could use our ratings of physical attractiveness as a rough index of a person's social desirability. Is there any evidence that these outside ratings are related to the subject's own perception of his social desirability? When we look at the data, we see that there is. The more attractive an individual is, the more popular he says he is. The correlation between physical attractiveness and popularity for men is .31 and for women is .46. (Both of these  $r$ 's are significant at  $p < .001$ .)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Darcy Abrahams, James Bell, Zita Brown, Eugene Gerard, Jenny Hoffman, Darwyn Linder, Perry Prestholdt, Bill Walster, and David Wark served as the experimenters. Male experimenters interviewed male subjects; female experimenters interviewed female subjects.

<sup>6</sup> With an  $N$  of 327, a correlation of .10 is significant at  $p < .05$ , a correlation of .15 at  $p < .01$ , and a correlation of .18 at  $p < .001$ .

### *Hypothesis 1*

Our first prediction was that a very socially desirable (attractive) subject would expect a "suitable" or "acceptable" date to possess more physical and personal charm and to be more considerate than would a less socially desirable subject.

We had two ways of testing whether or not attractive subjects did, in fact, have more rigorous requirements for an acceptable date than did less attractive individuals. Before the subject was assigned a date, he was asked how physically attractive, how personally attractive, and how considerate he expected his date to be. His answers to these three questions were summed, and an index of degree of the perfection he expected was computed. From the data, it appears that the more attractive the subject is, the more attractive, personable, and considerate he expects his date to be. The correlation between physical attractiveness and total expectations in a date is .18 for men and .23 for women.

A second way an individual's stringency of requirements could have been tested was by seeing whether or not the subject refused to go out with an "unsuitable" date. We wanted to eliminate the possibility that attractive and unattractive subjects would attend the dance with different frequencies, so we encouraged subjects to meet one another at the dance. However, it is possible that a few individuals were ingenious enough to get a preview of their dates before their public appearance together. We tried to determine whether or not attractive individuals rejected their partners *before* the dance more often than did unattractive ones.

It will be recalled that four raters rated each subject on an 8-point scale of attractiveness. We then separated subjects into three approximately equal-sized groups on the basis of these ratings. Men receiving an average rating of from 1.50 to 4.00 and women rated 1.50 to 4.75 were classified as *Ugly* individuals; men receiving an average rating of from 5.25 to 6.00 and women rated 5.00-5.75 were classified as *Average* individuals; and men rated 6.25 8.00 and women rated 6.00 8.00 were classified as

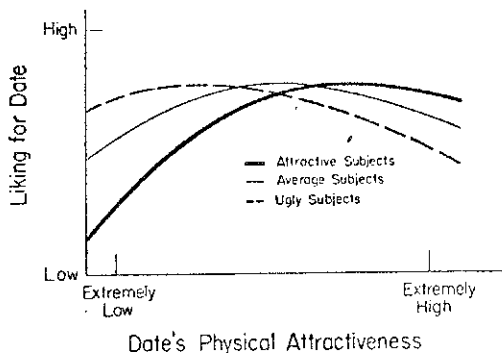


FIG. 1. Amount of liking predicted for dates of various attractiveness by Ugly, Average, and Attractive subjects.

*Attractive* individuals. We then contacted the 44 couples who did not attend the computer dance and interviewed them about their reasons for not attending. Attractive subjects did not reject their dates before the dance any more often than did unattractive subjects.

#### *Behavioral Measures of Rejection*

After men had arrived at the dance, or at their date's home, they met the partner who had been randomly assigned to them. Then during intermission, the subjects rated their liking for their dates. Since partners were randomly assigned, very attractive individuals should be assigned to just as attractive partners, on the average, as are average or ugly individuals. Thus, if during intermission, very handsome individuals rate their dates as less attractive, less personable, and less considerate than do less attractive men, this would indicate that attractive men are more harsh in their standards and ratings than are less attractive men. Also, if attractive individuals are more harsh in their standards they should, on the average, like their dates less, express less of a desire to date their partner again, and should actually try to date their computer partner less often than do less attractive individuals. When we look at the data, we see that this first hypothesis is confirmed.

The more attractive a man is, the less physically and personally attractive he thinks his date is ( $F = 8.88$ ,  $df = 1/318$ ,  $p$

$< .01$ ), the less he likes her ( $F = 6.69$ ,  $p < .01$ ), the less he would like to date her again ( $F = 14.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and the less often the date says he actually did ask her out again ( $F = 3.15$ ,  $ns$ ). Similarly, the more attractive a woman is, the less physically and personally attractive she thinks her date is ( $F = 5.71$ ,  $df = 1/318$ ,  $p < .05$ ), the less she likes her date ( $F = 2.23$ ,  $ns$ ), and the less she would like to date him again ( $F = 13.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Though it is clear that the more attractive subjects do appear to judge their dates more harshly than do unattractive subjects, we would like to note that this variable does *not* account for a very large portion of the total variance. For example, the relationships we have demonstrated between the subject's attractiveness and his expectations and evaluations of a date are strongly significant in five of the seven cases reported. However, correlations for the above variables range from only .07 to .20.

Hypothesis II proposed that an individual would most often choose to date a partner of approximately his own attractiveness. Hypothesis III stated that if individuals were to interact with partners of varying physical attractiveness, in a naturalistic setting, an individual would be better liked and would more often want to continue to date a partner similar to himself in attractiveness. Figure 1 depicts graphically the theoretical expectation that subjects will most often choose and most often like dates of approximately their own attractiveness.

Statistically, we test Hypotheses II and III by testing the significance of the interaction between date's attractiveness and subject's attractiveness in influencing the subject's *attempts* to date the partner, his *desire* to date the partner, and his liking for his date.

In Table 1, as in Figure 1, the subjects who supplied information to us were divided into three groups—Ugly subjects, Average subjects, and Attractive subjects. Unlike Figure 1, however, the actual attractiveness of the dates the subjects are rating is not allowed to vary continuously; for the sake of clarity, the dates were also divided into three attractiveness groups.

So that we could very precisely assess whether or not the interaction we predicted was significant, we also examined the data by dividing subjects and their dates into five attractiveness levels. When the  $5 \times 5$  interaction is examined, however, the conclusions and  $F$ s are identical to those we form on the basis of the less fine discriminations ( $3 \times 3$ ) reported in Table 1. For this reason, the smaller breakdown is presented.

Hypotheses II and III are not supported. The subject's attractiveness does not significantly interact with the date's attractiveness in determining his attempt to date her, his desire to date her, or his liking for her. In *no case* is there a significant interaction. If we look at the *actual* attempts of men to date their partners (Table 1:I), we find that men did not more often ask out dates similar to themselves in attractiveness. (These data were secured in a follow-up study.) The only important determinant of whether or not the date was asked out again was how attractive the *date* was. The most attractive girls are most often asked out ( $F = 12.02$ ,  $df = 1/318$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This is generally true *regardless of the attractiveness of the man* who is asking her out. There is *not* a significant tendency for subjects to try to date partners of approximately their own physical desirability. The interaction  $F$  which is necessary to demonstrate such a tendency is very small ( $F = .07$ ).

Our hypothesis (III) that individuals would best *like* dates similar to themselves in attractiveness also fails to be supported by the data. During intermission, individuals indicated how much they liked their dates on a scale ranging from 2.5 ("Like extremely much") to  $-2.5$  ("Dislike extremely much"). From Table 1, Sections II and III, it is apparent that by far the greatest determinant of how much liking an individual feels for his partner is simply how attractive the partner is. The more attractive the female date is, the better liked she is ( $F = 59.26$ ,  $df = 1/318$ ) and the more often the man says that he would like to date her ( $F = 49.87$ ). Men do not overrate women at their own attractiveness level. (Interaction  $F$ s for liking and desire to date = 2.53 and .69, respectively.) Very surprising to us was

TABLE 1  
VARIOUS MEASURES OF THE SUBJECTS' LIKING FOR THEIR DATES AND SUBJECTS' DESIRE TO DATE THEIR PARTNERS

	Date's physical attractiveness		
	Ugly	Average	Attractive
I. % Ss actually asking date out			
According to ugly male Ss	.16	.21	.40
According to average male Ss	.12	.25	.22
According to attractive male Ss	.00	.26	.29
II. How much S says he liked his date			
According to ugly male Ss	.06	.57	.90
According to average male Ss	-.10	.58	1.50
According to attractive male Ss	-.62	.16	.82
According to ugly female Ss	.03	.71	.96
According to average female Ss	-.10	.61	1.50
According to attractive female Ss	-.13	.21	.89
III. % Ss saying they wanted to date partner again			
According to ugly male Ss	.41	.53	.80
According to average male Ss	.30	.50	.78
According to attractive male Ss	.04	.37	.58
According to ugly female Ss	.53	.56	.92
According to average female Ss	.35	.69	.71
According to attractive female Ss	.27	.27	.68
IV. How many subsequent dates couples had			
Ugly male Ss	.09	1.23	.73
Average male Ss	.30	.94	.17
Attractive male Ss	.00	2.08	.53
V. Amount S thinks date likes him			
Guesses by ugly male Ss	.47 <sup>b</sup>	.52	.43
Guesses by average male Ss	.55	.64	.65
Guesses by attractive male Ss	.77	.53	.58
Guesses by ugly female Ss	.41	.41	.35
Guesses by average female Ss	.38	.58	.55
Guesses by attractive female Ss	.63	.65	.61
VI. No. of Ss in each cell			
Ugly male Ss	(32)	(43)	(50)
Average male Ss	(43)	(36)	(41)
Attractive male Ss	(26)	(38)	(38)

<sup>a</sup> The higher the number, the more the subject says he liked his date.

<sup>b</sup> The higher the number, the more the subject thinks his date liked him.

the fact that a *man's* physical attractiveness is also by far the largest determinant of how well *he* is liked. We had assumed that physical attractiveness would be a much less im-

portant determinant of liking for men than for women. However, it appears that it is just as important a determinant. The more attractive the man, the more his partner likes him ( $F = 55.79$ ,  $df = 1/318$ ) and the more often she says she wants to date him again ( $F = 37.24$ ). As before, we see that women do not tend to overrate partners at their own attractiveness level. (Interaction  $F$ s for liking and desire to date = .07 and .08, respectively.)

In order to get a better idea of the extent to which liking was related to the date's physical attractiveness, we examined the correlation between these two variables. The correlations between date's attractiveness and the partner's liking is almost as high as the reliability of the attractiveness ratings.

Our measure of physical attractiveness is not highly reliable. When rating the subject's physical attractiveness, raters saw the subject for only a few seconds as the subject moved along in a line. In addition, raters had to devise their own standards of attractiveness. Probably as a consequence of the preceding factors, the attractiveness ratings made by the four raters of the same individual intercorrelate .49-.58. In addition, there is a factor which may further reduce the reliability of our attractiveness measure from the time of the rating to the time of the dance. At the time of the rating, the subjects were in school clothes, casually dressed, while on the day of the dance they were dressed for a date. It is possible that this difference would have produced a change in the subject's relative attractiveness orderings. In spite of these limitations, the correlation between a *woman's* average physical attractiveness rating and her male partner's liking for her is .44; the correlation between her attractiveness and whether or not he wants to continue to date her is .39; and between her attractiveness and how much he actually does ask her out subsequently is .17. The correlations between a *man's* average physical attractiveness rating and his partner's liking for him and desire to date him are .36 and .31, respectively.

When we examine the relationship between the *individual's* own estimation of the date's

physical attractiveness and his expression of liking for her, the correlations are still higher. The correlation between liking of the date and evaluation of the date's physical attractiveness is .78 for male subjects and .69 for female subjects.

It appears that the more attractive the date, the more he was liked, and the more the subject desired to date him regardless of how attracted the date was to the subject. The happy accommodation that we proposed between what an individual desires and what he can realistically hope to attain appears not to exist. The lack of symmetry between the individual's liking for his date and the date's liking for the individual is striking. The correlation between how much the man says he likes his partner and how much she likes him is virtually zero:  $r = .03$ . Nor is there a significant correlation between whether or not the subject wants to date his partner again and whether she wants to date him:  $r = .07$ . Clearly, a variable that we assumed would be very important—how much the date likes individual—does not appear to be an important determinant of the individual's ratings. Sheer physical attractiveness appears to be the overriding determinant of liking.

How can we account for the singular importance of physical attractiveness in determining the individual's liking for the other? There seem to be several plausible explanations:

1. Perhaps it could be argued that in the relationships we have discussed it is not really physical attractiveness that is so crucial, but one of the *correlates* of attractiveness. For example, we know from developmental studies of intelligent individuals (Terman, 1925, 1947, 1959) that intelligence, physical attractiveness, creativity, and certain personality traits are often positively correlated. Perhaps it is one of these correlated variables that is really important in determining liking.

From the other evidence we have on this point and which we will present in the next paragraphs, it appears that "intelligence" and "personality" are *not* better predictors of liking than physical attractiveness.

### *Intelligence and Achievement Measures*

Students' high school percentile ranks and MSAT scores are undoubtedly much more reliable measures than is our measure of physical attractiveness. Yet, these measures have only a very weak relationship to liking. The higher the male's high school percentile rank, the less his partner likes him ( $r = -.18$ ) and the less she wants to date him again ( $r = -.04$ ) ( $N = 303$ ). Male's MSAT scores correlate .04 with both the woman's liking for him and her desire to date him ( $N = 281$ ). The higher the female's high school percentile rank, the less her partner likes her ( $r = -.07$ ) and the less he desires to date her again ( $r = -.09$ ). High school rank is uncorrelated with his actual attempt to date her again ( $r = .00$ ) ( $N = 323$ ). Females' MSAT scores correlate  $-.05$ ,  $-.06$ , and  $-.06$  with these same variables ( $N = 306$ ). It is clear then that intelligence is clearly not a variable of the same importance as physical attractiveness in determining liking. In no case did a subject's intellectual achievement or ability test scores have a significant relationship to the liking his date expressed for him.

### *Personality Measures*

The subjects also completed several personality measures which could reasonably be expected to predict the liking one would engender in a social situation.<sup>7</sup>

*MCI: Social relationships (SR).* Low scorers are said to have good social skills, have acceptable manners, and be courteous, mature individuals (Berdie, Layton, Swanson, Hagenah, & Merwin, 1962).

*MMPI: Masculinity-femininity (Mf).* Low scorers are said to be more masculine in their values, attitudes, and interest, styles of expression and speech, and in their sexual relationships than high scorers (Dahlstrom & Welsh, 1962).

*MMPI: Social introversion (Si).* Low scorers are said to be more extroverted in

their thinking, social participation, and emotional involvement.

*Berger's Scale of Self-Acceptance (1952).*

When we look at the correlations between an individual's scores on these personality measures and the liking his date expresses for him, we see that these personality measures are not as good predictors of liking as is our crude measure of physical attractiveness. When we look at the data, we see that the low scoring individuals on the MCI (SR), on the MMPI (Mf), and on the MMPI (Si) or high scorers on Berger's Scale of Self-Acceptance are only slightly better liked by their dates than are high scoring individuals. Men's scores on these tests correlate  $-.11$ ,  $-.12$ ,  $-.10$ , and  $.14$  with their dates' liking for them. Women's scores on these tests correlate only  $-.18$ ,  $-.10$ ,  $-.08$ , and  $.03$  with their dates' liking. Our personality measures, then, like our intelligence measures, appear to be very inadequate predictors of liking.

It is, of course, possible that intelligence and personality determinants would have been more important had individuals had more time to get acquainted. It may be that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours is too short a time for individuals to discover much about their partners' intelligence or personality, while physical attractiveness is obvious from the start. It is not likely, however, that intelligence or personality variables are "really" underlying the correlations we obtained between attractiveness and romantic liking.

2. It may be that in this situation, individuals were not very affected by their dates' liking for them because the dates were so polite that it was impossible for the individual to know if he was accepted or rejected. Or, perhaps individuals were so eager to be liked that they did not want to correctly perceive the available cues.

The only available evidence for this position is ambiguous. The correlation between the partner's stated liking for the subject and the subject's perception of the partner's liking for him is .23 for male subjects and .36 for female subjects. The subject, thus, has some, though not a great deal of, ability in estimating how much his partner likes him. The reader may see subjects' guesses concern-

<sup>7</sup> MCI scores were secured for 234 of the male subjects and 240 of the female subjects during freshman testing. In addition, the MMPI had been administered to a sample including 50 of the men and 41 of the women.



ing how much their date likes them in Table 1:V. Possible answers to the question, "How much does your partner like you?" could range from (2.5) "Date likes me extremely much" to (-2.5) "Date dislikes me extremely much."

3. It may be that our findings are limited to large group situations, where young people are in very brief contact with one another. Perhaps if individuals had been exposed to one another for *long* periods of time, similarity of interests, beliefs, and reciprocal liking would come to be more important than physical appearance in determining liking. Finally, it might also be true that physical attractiveness loses some of its importance as individuals get to be *older* than the 18-year-olds interviewed in our study.

We should note that, even though further contact may have decreased the importance of physical attractiveness, whether or not the subject attempted to continue to date his partner depended on the partner's physical attractiveness. Similarly, though our findings may well be limited to the youthful population that we interviewed (average age: 18 years), it is also true that this is the age at which many individuals make their lifelong romantic choices.

4. Finally, it may be that if we had arranged more conventional single dates, the

date's personality and conversational abilities would have been more important. It may have been that just getting to display a very attractive date compensated for any rejection on the date's part.

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